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National Life and Character ; a Forecast. By CHARLES H. PEARSON. Pp. 357. Price, \$2.00. New edition. London and New York : Macmillan & Co., 1894.

Under this non-committal title, Mr. Pearson cloaks a most gloomy prophecy as to the future of society. The author opens his work with the statement that the white race cannot prosper outside the temperate latitudes, bringing forward as proof of this the unsuccessful attempts at colonization in Africa, Asia and South America. On the other hand, he says there is no more room for the race to increase within the temperate zone, for the ratio of land to man has already passed the point which is most advantageous for man. What is the necessary consequence? Is it not clear, that either the white race must become stationary and prevent the immigration of the lower peoples, in which case the final result will be an inability to compete with the overwhelming number of these cheap producers; or else, increasing in numbers without increasing in resources, the white must finally sink to the level of his outside rival? Into this latter alternative Mr. Pearson believes the race to have been already forced, and he sees a consequent lowering of moral tone, a tendency toward State Socialism, a decline in the arts, and a general tendency for the human race to become "fibreless and weak." This tendency, he continues, must increase, for the lower portion of our population is constantly gaining on the higher; cities are constantly multiplying at the expense of the country; in science and invention we have only the details to fill in; and from time to time each branch of literature presents some example so perfect that emulation is useless. Thus, one by one these branches are being closed to human effort, until, finally, man will be so weak that he will do nothing noble if he can, and the fields of legitimate ambition will be so closed that he can do nothing noble if he will. In other words, society has passed its high-water mark in intellectual, moral and physical development, and degeneration has already set in. Such is the conclusion which our author places before us.

There is a homely proverb to the effect that a long succession of dainties makes brown bread taste good. If such is the case, the many books which, like Kidd's "Social Evolution," emphasize man's constant progress toward a higher plane of civilization, must make one appreciate this gloomy forecast. Is it not possible that this contrast, aided by the excellence of our author's style, and the ready flow of arguments, may partially blind us to some things which can be urged in opposition? Granting that the white man is not at present a successful colonizer of the torrid zone, does it follow that such regions may not be used for his benefit? Mr. Pearson does not cite a single case of a

white nation which has maintained a vigorous life at home losing control of any tropical possession. On the contrary, the European powers are constantly extending their control. Even our author admits that it is in a great measure the government of the white race which allows the colored man to advance. Does it not follow, then, that the worst we have to fear is a series of Indias under white management? It is admitted that such control cannot be lost until the two races are equal; and so long as the white advances at home, he can remain ahead of the black in India; or if the colored man equals his teacher, then the same causes that produce a stationary order in the white will have a like effect on the black, and we shall see an equal race all over the world governed by the same conditions.

The only chance for Mr. Pearson's forecast being true is the lowering of the white race by a fall in its standard of living. This, he says, has already commenced. Man has begun to be crowded, he has looked to the State for aid, he is not to-day the equal of what he has been. In support of this position, which is the crucial point of the book, the author compares our leading statesmen, writers, inventors, etc., with those of the past. In this comparison he is a trifle unjust. He seems to hold in one scale the best representatives of two centuries' talent in literature, art and science and to expect the past fifty years to fill the other scale with the equals of these. Now, while we may not be able to produce the peers of all the great men from Shakespeare to Pitt our generation may be able to show as strong an array of talent as any like period of time. Although the leaders of to-day may not stand out so prominently above their fellows as did the leaders of previous epochs, can not the reason be other than the one Mr. Pearson assigns? The average of society may be higher, and if so a man must be far abler now than one hundred years ago to occupy the same relative position. If we have no men who stand out from their fellows as did Pitt, Mirabeau or Hamilton, we have parliamentary leaders whose store of information and shrewdness is no less than theirs was. The person who looks to see in the present the exact copy of the past is sure to be disappointed. Progress moves in waves, no two being alike, and only every seventh wave is a great one. Not only should these facts be considered, but we must remember the difficulty of judging one's own contemporaries. It is possible that some second Mr. Pearson, writing in 1950, may think that an age which produced statesmen like Bismarck and Beaconsfield, military leaders like Von Moltke and Lee, orators like Gladstone or Blaine, historians like Von Sybel and Parkman, not to speak of leaders in other departments of knowledge like Spencer, Proctor or Browning was not wholly inferior to some previous epoch.

There is no need of great inventors or scientists, the writer claims, for there is nothing left to learn or invent; moreover the present generation does not encourage inventors as did the last century. Now, in a way, this is safe ground, for inventions cannot be foretold, yet it might be instructive to note the effect on Mr. Pearson's whole argument should Mr. Galton succeed, with the aid of artificial ice, in making the tropical zone habitable for the white man, a thing which he considers extremely possible. Nor is it hardly fair that an age which sees capitalists eager to put their money behind a successful inventor and magazines offering their best assistance in furtherance of his efforts, should be considered hostile to invention. Was it not about a century ago that Fulton offered his steamboat to Napoleon, and the man who only needed control of the English Channel to be master of the world laughed at him? Can Mr. Pearson furnish a more marked case to-day?

Finally, if all of our author's argument should be admitted, is there not reasonable doubt as to the truth of his premises? When we compare America and Australia with England or France, and reflect on the fact that they could be self-supporting countries if need be, we must admit that, even with the present habits of life maintained, there is much room for the expansion of population. What could be done if those habits were changed! Omitting all considerations as to the substitution of electricity for horse-power, and the consequent increase in our supply of grain, we must ask ourselves, Has the limit of population been reached when enough land is wasted in the production of whiskey to support millions? Can our author maintain that the world is able to support no more people, when our existing resources are not utilized to the best advantage? I do not speak of the increased powers of production which some economists maintain will result from a greater variety of consumption, but merely of our existing supply. Is it not possible that the very increase of power by the central government, which Mr. Pearson laments, may prove a blessing if it leads to a substitution of national for individual prosperity? Even should the lower races flood the temperate zone, there is no reason to suppose that a civilization might not result which would be the equal, or even the superior, of our own. We have seen remarkable progress on the part of the black race in our own country, yet greater on the part of the yellow race in Japan; and all within thirty years. What could we not expect in three hundred? Should not a considerable share of our prosperity be attributed to the temperate climate in which we live? Our Saxon and Frankish ancestors were on as low a plane of civilization as are the black and yellow races of to-day. But the issue is far broader than the mere increase of some low types of character. It is

simply this : Shall the world, which has thus far been growing better, be turned from this path and go downward? Mr. Pearson himself who, tells us in his introduction, that the most conspicuous examples of false prophecies are taken from those made by eminent statesmen. May we not hope that the forecasts of our poets who occupy, in our generation, the position held by the older race of prophets, are more nearly correct than is this despondent prediction of an eminent Australian statesman !

While our author has given us a work with whose conclusions there may be honest differences of opinion, there can be no doubt that he does call attention to forces in our civilization which are too often neglected. If Mr. Pearson succeeds in turning society from a glorification over its prosperity to an attempt to remedy its imperfections, we may well thank him for his efforts.

C. H. LINCOLN.

Philadelphia.

Eight Hours for Work. By JOHN RAE. Pp. 340. Price, \$1.25.
London and New York : Macmillan & Co., 1894.

The purpose of the book is well expressed in the following extract from the preface : "I was led to undertake the following inquiry, because I could find no solid bottom in any of the current prognostications, favorable or unfavorable, as to the probable consequences of a general adoption of an eight-hours working day. They were all alike built on a little stock of assumptions about the natural effects of shorter working hours, which nobody seemed to think it necessary to verify. . . . It seemed, therefore, that if we wanted to know what was to happen now, the best way to begin was to find out what had happened before." The author finds that "the available evidence is unexpectedly copious, and its teaching is unexpectedly plain and uniform." The book seems to fully justify these two statements. The number of experiments made with short hours is certainly surprising, and their result still more so.

The effect of short hours on production is first considered. Most writers, even the friends of the movement, have usually assumed, with Professor Marshall, that production would be lessened considerably, if not proportionally, by a change from nine or ten hours to eight, and further, that the loss would be greatest where most automatic machinery is used ; and finally, that if production were maintained at near the old rate during the trial period, it would decline after a few months when the workmen considered the case settled. Experiment in a great variety of industries seems to prove all these